

NEWS RELEASE

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Carol A. Murray, Commissioner

For Immediate Release

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Contacts: Nancy Mayville
NHDOT Municipal Highways
Bureau (603) 271-2107
Gary Lynn
NHDES (603) 271-8873
NHDOT Public Information
Office (603) 271-6495

GROUNDWATER CLEANUP EFFORT PROCEEDS IN PLYMOUTH
SUBSURFACE GASOLINE VACUUMING WORK TO BEGIN

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, announces work is expected to begin in Plymouth on what is expected to be the lengthy and expensive cleanup of significant deposits of gasoline in groundwater near the Pemigewasset River and the NH Route 175A bridge.

As part of a NHDOT study looking into the feasibility of removing gasoline from numerous monitoring wells, a private contractor will begin the week of October 7, 2002 vacuuming out quantities of gasoline that has been discovered floating on the surface of groundwater. This will be done in an effort to identify appropriate remedial measures that can be taken prior to, during and after construction activities associated with the planned replacement of the NH Route 175A bridge over the Pemigewasset River, slated for 2004.

This gasoline groundwater contamination apparently dates back several decades when the Town of Plymouth had several gas stations and/or underground storage tank facilities in the vicinity of the intersection of Main Street and Bridge Street. The problem was apparently first discovered in 1984 when a Plymouth State College student noticed a petroleum sheen in the Pemigewasset River just north of the Route 175A bridge and notified the Plymouth Fire Department. Further investigations revealed a substantial amount of gasoline at various locations below the ground surface.

A Groundwater Management Permit was issued in 1994 for the area south of Bridge Street. There are currently approximately 150 groundwater-monitoring wells or subsurface explorations in the area from the Plymouth Court House to Main Street to Pearl Street to the Pemigewasset River.

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation has purchased, or is in the process of purchasing, land parcels directly impacted by the planned bridge replacement. In association with this effort, several of these buildings have already been razed, while others are scheduled for demolition. Some of these lots will be used for staging areas for equipment necessary for future work.

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